

# OWL PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## OWL URGES IMMEDIATE SENATE ACTION ON MANAGED CARE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS (S 1890)

OWL today (Wednesday, May 13, 1998) urged immediate Senate action on the Patients' Bill of Rights (S 1890). "The President" asserted Deborah Briceland-Betts, OWL's Executive Director, has mandated some of these critical managed care consumer protections for federally-financed health care programs, and it is urgent that Congress now provide all Americans have the same guarantees of fair access and quality treatment in their health care plans."

OWL urges prompt consideration of the Patients' Bill of Rights (s 1890), legislation that would provide the enforceable consumer protections in managed care that older women require. "While OWL strongly believes that all programs advancing quality women's health care are critical priorities," Briceland-Betts continued, "the passage of comprehensive legislation that meets the needs of older women for increased access and quality in managed care is an imperative."

Just one year ago, OWL issued a report showing that older women have more chronic illness than men and, as a result, need more access to specialists, leading-edge medicines and technology. According to the report, managed care plans, in attempting to save money, restrict women's access to these necessary services. "The report demonstrates," according to Briceland-Betts, "that, for example, the more restrictive the pharmaceutical formulary, the more older women make trips to the doctor, to the emergency room, and to the pharmacist."

"OWL's report," she concluded, "provides a blueprint for Congressional action on these issues--this legislation would implement most of its recommendations. Because enforceable consumer protections are critically important to America's women, no matter what their age, we urge immediate Senate action on the Patients' Bill of Rights."

OWL (the Older Women's League), the only national grassroots membership organization to focus solely on issues unique to women as they age, has 73 chapters across the country. Many of its members have led successful advocacy efforts for similar managed care consumer protections on the state level.

Copies of the report, **Women and Managed Care: Opportunities and Risks for Midlife and Older Women** are available from Roberta Weiner at OWL, 202/783-6686.

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